



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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CHAFEE ANNOUNCES \$2.6 MILLION TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF CRIME

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee has been notified by the U.S. Department of Justice that Rhode Island will receive a total of \$2,673,000 for victims of serious crimes. This funding falls within the fiscal year 2005 allocations of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Both the Rhode Island Justice Commission and the Office of the General Treasurer will receive portions of the award. This funding is often the last avenue of support for Rhode Island's violent crime victims.

Senator Chafee has recently voiced his strong support for the VOCA program, joining in authoring a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science, opposing recent Bush Administration proposals to rescind all amounts remaining in the Crime Victims Fund at the end of fiscal year 2006. Resources for the Fund come from the collection of Federal criminal fines, not taxpayer revenues.

"For twenty years, VOCA has been the primary means by which the Federal government has supported critical services to aid victims of crimes. Deriving its funding from fines and other penalties paid by federal criminal offenders, the program has effectively financed critical assistance programs without placing the financial burden on the backs of taxpayers. Removing the remaining funds in VOCA's Crime Victims Fund after fiscal year 2006 would jeopardize the ability of these programs to continue serving victims," Senator Chafee said.

The Rhode Island Justice Commission will be allocated \$1,761,000 under VOCA's Victim Assistance program. The award allocates monies from VOCA's Crime Victim Fund (the Fund) to enhance crime victims' services in Rhode Island. The program provided financial assistance to 32 programs across the state in 2004, and will continue to aid these programs directly supporting services to victims of violent crime.

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The funding supports critical services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, drunk driving, elder abuse, and all other types of criminal activity. Services include crisis intervention, emergency shelter, mental health counseling, justice advocacy, and many others.

Additionally, the Office of the General Treasurer will receive \$912,000 as part of VOCA's Crime Victim Compensation Program. Victims are eligible for awards up to \$25,000 for uncovered medical care, lost wages and support, as well as funeral expenses.

"Federal funding is an essential component of Rhode Island's Crime Victim Compensation Program. This fund of last resort has helped to provide financial compensation to thousands of victims of violent crimes," said General Treasurer Paul Tavares, when notified of the award.

"The support services which will be allowed to continue as a result of this grant are important in assimilating victims back into society. At no cost to the American taxpayer, the benefits of this program are so substantial and far reaching that they should be preserved," Chafee continued.

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